Infant Safe Sleep: A Curriculum for Nurses on Labor and Delivery Units

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INTRODUCTION

• Approximately 3500 infants die annually in the United States from sleep-related deaths. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a safe sleep environment that can reduce the risk of all sleep-related infant deaths. However, these recommendations are inconsistently adopted in communities and often rejected by parents. Studies have indicated that parents listen to nurses and model their actions regarding the sleep position of their new infant. The nurse’s behavior is essential in influencing parents to place their babies in a safe sleep environment, and staff education programs significantly increase the knowledge acquisition, attitudes, and practice intentions of these health care professionals.

METHODS

This doctoral project is a component of an infant safe sleep campaign, initiated by the Vermont Department of Health (VDH). An educational module was created for nursing staff on labor and delivery units in a number of Vermont hospitals to provide them with evidence-based recommendations for infant safe-sleep practices and to highlight their vital role in providing a consistent message to parents. The module includes the current safe sleep guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics; risk factors for sudden unexplained infant death; common misconceptions in regard to safe sleep practices; cultural aspects of infant safe sleep; nurses as role models and educators; and the evidence behind commonly advertised products such as baby slings, baby boxes, and owl monitors. Through the use of pre- and post-educational module viewing surveys, this project will determine how an educational module for nursing staff on labor and delivery units will impact their knowledge of infant safe sleep and the messages they provide to parents of newborns.

RESULTS

The educational module was created for nursing staff on labor and delivery units in a number of Vermont hospitals to provide them with evidence-based recommendations for infant safe-sleep practices and to highlight their vital role in providing a consistent message to parents. The educational module was designed to improve nurses’ knowledge and compliance with infant safe-sleep teaching to parents after viewing the module, and they found the educational module informative and believe it will help nurses to provide a consistent and evidence-based message about infant safe sleep. The module includes the current safe sleep guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics, risk factors for sudden unexplained infant death, common misconceptions in regard to safe sleep practices, cultural aspects of infant safe sleep, nurses as role models and educators, and the evidence behind commonly advertised products such as baby slings, baby boxes, and owl monitors.

DISCUSSION

• Nine labor and delivery nurse managers have viewed the most complete version of the module and have provided constructive feedback.

• Found module to be informative and believe it will help nurses to provide a consistent and evidence-based message about infant safe sleep.

• Reported feeling better able to verbalize infant safe sleep teaching to parents after viewing the module.

• Believed that providing module to their nurses would ensure a universal response during parent education.

• Strengths included the information presented regarding slings, baby boxes, owl monitors, risk factors of sudden unexplained infant death (SUID) with differences between cultures, and myths vs. truths about SUID.

• The final product has not been implemented at this time due to delays in key informant interviews by John Snow Inc. (JSI).

• Strengths included the information presented regarding slings, baby boxes, owl monitors, risk factors of sudden unexplained infant death (SUID) with differences between cultures, and myths vs. truths about SUID.

CONCLUSIONS

• Once this module is complete, it will be used as mandatory education for nurses on labor and delivery units in Vermont to help provide a consistent message to parents regarding evidence-based infant safe-sleep practices.

• This educational module can be easily modified as new information becomes available.

• Future dissemination to pediatric primary care and specialty care, as well as women’s health and family practice settings.

REFERENCES


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